

Online Journal of Health Ethics

Volume 4 | Issue 2

Article 2

Purchasing Health Portions

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Recommended Citation

Davis, S. P. (2007). Purchasing Health Portions . *Online Journal of Health Ethics*, 4(2).
<http://dx.doi.org/10.18785/ojhe.0402.02>

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Commentary:

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Editor-in-Chief

Online Journal of Health Ethics

Purchasing Health Portions

As a child growing up in a small town in South Carolina, my parents often sang the jingle, *if religion were a thing that money could buy, the rich would live and the poor would die*. We would then resound unequivocally that ‘no one could purchase religion!’ No, well.... maybe not. But, I ask, what about health? Can health be purchased? How much would you pay for it, were it for sale? And, who sells health? What does it look like and how is it packaged? Is health the same as insurance? Or, is insurance the ticket to enter the ‘health’ store to obtain the product? Every day, there are those who attempt to buy ‘health’ when they pay only a portion of their rent or part of the utility bill in order to buy prescribed medications for their ‘health’ sake. They take the needed ‘health’ portions, only then to find themselves with problems which cannot be healed by the purchased ‘health’ portions. What impact does lack of sufficient monetary resources have on one’s health, even if one is able to pinch and squeeze to buy the necessary ‘health’ portions? Do we know? Is that a part of health care practice.....to be concerned if patients can or cannot purchase our recommended ‘health’ portions? We watched the defeat of legislation aimed to extend health insurance for the little ones of our country. Who advocates for the children? Are we to be concerned about parents of the little ones who cannot buy the ‘health’ portions? Having served on the Institute of Medicine Committee that investigated the consequences of uninsurance for three years, I know that the majority of those who lack health insurance are working adults who cannot afford to buy coverage. Further, if the children are covered by some state or federal agency and the

parents are uninsured, the children are still at risk. In fact, if all members of the family are insured except one, the entire family is at risk. Think about it, how far would your savings go to pay for intensive care hospitalization for one week on an uninsured family member? And, what are the psychological implications when you can't buy the 'health' portions for your loved ones? Unless you have endless resources, most of us would become bankrupt before a month is out. Somehow that seems antithetical for someone residing in the richest nation of the world. However, we know that thousands are experiencing major financial burdens in order to purchase their 'health' portions. In the upcoming election year, I ask that you support those who are committed to making the price of 'health' portions such that all can purchase it. I submit that our nation is only as secured as all citizens are insured – that is, to purchase 'health' portions. Take care of yourself. Most of us **cannot afford** to be sick!



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